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Political Information: Soviet Interest in
Reactions of Local Czechoslovak, Polish, and
Yugoslav Groups to Soviet Coup in Czechoslovakia

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1. The Soviet coup in Czechoslovakia gave rise to many rumors among Slavic groups in Shanghai. Two of the most common were as follows: (1) American authorities in the Shanghai area were covertly directing the formation of anti-Soviet organizations among the various local Slavic non-Soviet groups. (2) A group of anti-Soviet Slavic people in Shanghai headed by Old Poles and anti-Soviet Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs were preparing a mass meeting and a possible demonstration against Moscow's aggressive and Fascistic policy in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Soviet and pro-Soviet Polish authorities in the Shanghai-Nanking area were concerned over these rumors.

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2.

3. V. N. Rogov, director of the Far East Department of TASS, arranged a meeting in the "Dom Polski" House, 191 Route Mayen (Hwating Road), of the members of the Executive Committee of the New Polish community, headed by Zaleski and Gnarowski. During this meeting, local Polish reaction to recent events in Czechoslovakia was discussed. Rogov stated that he already had complete information from the local Czechoslovak community and that he was interested in knowing if local Slavic groups were accusing the USSR of interference in the internal affairs of Slavic countries of Eastern Europe. Rogov admitted that he had received information that there is a movement going on in Shanghai to form a joint protest against Moscow's "reported interference in the freedom of Slavic nations of Europe." He eloquently approved events in Czechoslovakia and appealed to local Poles to abstain from any protest.

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4. Because most of the local Polish community, both the pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet elements, were actually not planning such a protest, these Polish leaders were puzzled over Rogov's anxiety about a possible campaign of protest abroad regarding events in Czechoslovakia. They informed Rogov that the Polish community had no such intentions. He appeared satisfied and promised to initiate more friendly Soviet-Slavic cooperation in Shanghai in the form of cultural exchanges and closer social cooperation. He even offered space for the Polish Club in 25X1 Soviet Sports Club.

5.

6. The resignation of Czechoslovak envoys to the United States and Canada and the persistent rumor that President Benes has committed suicide have aroused a great deal of uneasiness among members of the Czechoslovak group. A. Pisarevsky (general manager of the Shanghai office of Skoda Works), a leading pro-Soviet Czechoslovak, stated that if Benes should commit suicide or resign, most of the local Czechoslovak community would sever relations with the present regime in Czechoslovakia. Pisarevsky fears that he and most of the local staff of Skoda Works will be fired by the new government. He is awaiting news of his fate from Urbanek, director general of Skoda Works for China, who is now in Prague. Pisarevsky is being violently criticized by Czechoslovak patriots, who brand as opportunistic his willingness to operate under the new regime. (F. Popper was said to be coming to China as the representative of Czechoslovak heavy industries; now, however, Popper is reportedly not returning.)
7. Vice Consul Chernonebov invited Pisarevsky to a conference about the situation among local Czechoslovaks. Chernonebov expressed the opinion that local Czechoslovaks will follow the "patriotic movement" started by Gottwald and his government. He promised to supply local Czechoslovaks with information through the "special services of TASS". Chernonebov denied the rumor about the death of Benes and referred to Masaryk's stand which, according to Chernonebov, "must be followed by all Czechoslovaks." Pisarevsky was impressed by Chernonebov's detailed knowledge of the local Czechoslovak community.
8. Because of the lack of reliable news from Czechoslovakia, the Shanghai Czechoslovak community is awaiting action by the Czechoslovak Legation in Nanking. A direct telephone call to the Legation in Nanking revealed that the Legation staff still does not have an officially-formulated opinion on the situation. The Legation requested Shanghai Czechoslovaks to wait calmly for further developments. A large majority of the Shanghai Czechoslovaks, and reportedly the Legation staff in Nanking, will align themselves with Benes and Masaryk; however, in the event of Benes' death or resignation, not even the prestige of Masaryk would prevent an open revolt of local Czechoslovaks against the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia.
9. At present the Shanghai Czechoslovak community is divided into three groups: a small pro-Soviet faction with A. Pisarevsky as one of the leaders; a middle-of-the-road group without any leaders; a small anti-Soviet group, also without any specific leader, which insists on an announcement of non-recognition of Gottwald's Communist Government.

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10. No demonstrations in Shanghai against the new Czechoslovak Communist regime are expected unless this regime causes a considerable change in the present system of issuing new passports to Czechoslovaks. According to a Czechoslovak law, present Czechoslovak passports must be renewed regardless of date of issue. Holders of these passports must present new documents concerning their citizenship status and political reliability. All those Czechoslovak citizens who claimed German or Hungarian as their mother tongue during the 1930 census are deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship except those who can prove that they actively participated in the Czechoslovak Liberation Movement during World War II, in Czechoslovakia or abroad. This law applies also to all Jewish people who professed German or Hungarian nationality instead of Yiddish or Hebrew. "Certificates of political reliability" are issued as proof of participation in the Liberation Movement and of correct behavior during the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Germans (Hungarians). Many Shanghai Czechoslovaks find themselves in a difficult position because in many cases such proof cannot be secured.

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11. A. Pisarevsky is not a genuine Czechoslovak citizen because he holds only a temporary travel passport secured for him by Skoda Works. Pisarevsky is a Russian Jewish emigre and claims to be a member of the Russian Emigre Association and at the same time a member of the Soviet Citizens' Association. His Czechoslovak passport has red covers (temporary) instead of the regular greyish-blue. The "red cover" passport was issued to foreigners /stateless emigres/ who were working for Czechoslovak business interests.

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